

**USDA-NRCS Minnesota Civil Rights Committee Minutes**  
**October 20<sup>th</sup> 2004; 9:35 a.m. – 3:05 p.m.**  
Waite Park Field Office, Waite Park, MN

Attendees: Amy Stratton, Chair of Civil Rights Committee  
Ann English, Advisor/CR Coordinator  
William Hunt, Minnesota State Conservationist  
Sandy Jerzak, FWP SEPM  
Julie Lindner, Area 3 Representative  
Stephen Lutes, Vice Chair of Civil Rights Committee / Area 2 Rep.  
Dennis Reimers, Area 6 Representative  
Mark Rose, Area 5 Representative  
Mike Walker, Committee Secretary / MLRA Office Rep.

Visitor: McKinley Posely, NRCS, Washington, DC

**Welcome**

The meeting was called to order by Amy Stratton, Committee Chair, at 9:35 am.

*Approve minutes of July 27, 2004*

Amy Stratton distributed copies of draft minutes from the previous quarterly CR committee meeting. A review revealed that an edit is needed on the third page of the draft minutes, where members of the Web site subcommittee are listed. The subcommittee actually consists of Dennis Reimers, Dave Wise, and Mike Walker. This edit having been recorded, Dennis Reimers ***moved*** that the minutes be approved. Mark Rose ***seconded*** and the motion ***passed***.

**CR Committee**

*Committee Member Terms*

Normal turnover in committee membership is approximately three members each year. Three members (Julie Lindner, Cutrina Moreland, and Mike Walker) are expected to leave or begin new terms this year. As of this meeting, it appears Cutrina will begin a new term and Julie and Mike will be leaving, but their replacements have not yet been named.

*Election of Secretary and Vice Chair*

Not knowing who will replace Julie Lindner and Mike Walker, elections for committee positions were postponed. Steve Lutes ***moved*** that members leaving the committee offer assistance to their supervisors in finding new members, and that current membership and secretary and vice-chair duties be maintained until the next quarterly meeting. Mike Walker ***seconded***. Discussion followed on how this action relates to bylaws. The motion ***passed***. New members will be seated and new secretary and vice chair elected at the next quarterly meeting.

## **2004 Reports**

### *FY 2004 Year end report (2004 Business Plan Completion Report, Budget Report)*

Next, we briefly reviewed the FY 04 Business Plan year end progress report. A bulletin is out regarding posters to display and sources to acquire them from. Committee members, as well as SEPMs, are to focus on recruitment activities. Amy Stratton emailed the fourth quarter report for review prior to this meeting.

### *MN NRCS Corrective Action Report*

Ann English updated us on developments since the review we had last November. Ann described the increased need for us to document CR related training given at a personnel meeting (e.g. an area meeting) and to document serving as part of a review team. Documentation may be in the form of meeting minutes and lists of attendees or participants. The documentation is needed to demonstrate that we are fulfilling items in the corrective action plan.

### *DN 714 Report*

Report is not available for us to review, today. Sources indicate that the report is changing from DN 714 to MD 715. Charles Montgomery and Mary Lou Werner will keep the committee informed.

## **Sub-Committee/SEPM Meeting Reports and Action**

### *Bulletins Subcommittee*

A bulletin on the advantages gained with increased diversity has been issued. The bulletin incorporated content from the NRCS social sciences institute.

### *Web Site Subcommittee*

An update and expansion of content on MN NRCS CR Web page is ongoing.

### *Awards Subcommittee*

A bulletin asking for nominations was issued. However, no nominations were received in return. The committee discussed what could have been done differently to result in a better outcome. It may be possible to make the nomination process less demanding. Steve Lutes ***moved*** that we send out a new request for nominations (to be in by Dec 15) and that in the meantime, CR committee members work with their supervisors to increase awareness of the award and to answer any questions. Dennis ***seconded***. The motion ***passed***.

The awards subcommittee will follow up and work to implement this motion via email (later in meeting, it was decided that this would be included on the agenda for an upcoming teleconference).

### *SEPM Meeting Report*

Recruitment was a primary focus of the meeting. The SEPMs are working to identify means to overcome lack of diversity and meet diversity goals established for MN. Ideas and feedback are appreciated.

#### *2005 Work Plan Committee*

The work plan combines activities of both the committee members and SEPMs. The committee members and SEPMs proceeded to skim through the entire document. We reviewed the role of the committee (from GM 404.6), mission, and vision on pp 6 and 7. We then discussed the resources we have as a committee, including training and resources for putting together cultural events.

Next, we discussed goals and objectives (beginning on p 8).

##### **Goal #1**

We need to plan for application review during January and February. A question came up as to what is being provided to schools for handout (by advisors or at career fairs) or posting on bulletin boards.

The committee also discussed what can be done to help students feel welcome during their work experience. Also discussed was the protocol for disseminating vacancy announcements – committee members may contact the SAA officer's staff with questions on this.

Mr. Hunt stated that some changes need to be made in the wording of objectives 1B and 1D as they appear in the draft business plan. He also suggested that an item be incorporated in goal #1 to facilitate the relationship of student employee with mentor.

##### **Goal #2**

Maintaining contacts in local schools and libraries can be a significant resource in pursuing outreach. While doing outreach, keep in mind that all cultures need to be recognized and that this is the point of July – MN NRCS All Cultural Appreciation month.

##### **Goal #3**

Objective 3C – need to approach these issues cooperatively with FAC

Objective 3C item 3- would be a better fit w/in goal #4

##### **Goal #4**

Regarding complaints – better to term the process as “receiving” or “to receive” a complaint or “complaint handling”

##### **Goal #5**

Time our award nomination and selection process so that recipient of MN award can be nominated for national award

There was further discussion of how SEPMs should be able to fit their action plans within the state business plan.

Regarding FY 2005 CR Committee budget:

Once our priorities have been firmed up, dollar amounts can be arrived at. As soon as the business plan and the budget are adopted, forward them to the state office.

The committee will convene a teleconference within 1 to 1 1/2 week with final review and adoption of the plan and budget on the agenda.

*(lunch break)*

The business plan will be edited in order to incorporate elements of the veterans emphasis program within the various other items of the business plan.

#### *2005 Committees Assignments and Work Tasks*

Through the coming year, many committee activities will take place within subcommittees. The subcommittees will focus on Recruitment, Notification, Cultural Resources, and Training. Details regarding the membership and chairperson for each of the subcommittees need to be resolved. Since two of the members of the new CR committee have yet to be named, subcommittee membership and other details cannot be finalized at today's meeting. Committee members began volunteering for assignment to subcommittees. Formation of subcommittees will continue during the upcoming teleconference.

#### *Check Kit Committee*

Steve Lutes reported on progress to date. Recent guidance directs that the acquisition and use of check kits will be under direction of the state Food & Agriculture Council (FAC). Mr. Hunt advises that we follow the guidance of the FAC in our roles and responsibilities associated with check kits.

Next, the committee viewed a videotape titled *And You Can Quote Me on That*. This is a documentary video featuring students with disabilities speaking about their experiences at the University of Michigan. It is available for loan from the Three Rivers RC&D Office (telephone 507/345-7418 x5)

### **CR in MN NRCS**

#### *Civil Rights Training Resources for MN NRCS Employees and NEW Employees*

A discussion of what training is available in CR topics. A major requirement is that the training result in an identifiable payoff. All new employees are now mandated to go to "boot camp" (which includes CR topics) at one of four locations. Mr. Hunt will bring in training resources (e.g. presentation by Kathy Starkweather) if there is a suitable venue. AgLearn is another alternative in gaining access to training resources.

#### *Diversity Awareness: How do we increase diversity in our agency, with our partners, and who we serve?*

While working with partners and those we serve, share information on resources for activities such as training and conferences. Persons to contact include LeAnn Buck (MASWCD) and Russ Root (RC&D).

#### *Upcoming Events*

Dennis Reimers mentioned plans for a tour of the Treaty Center in St. Peter. Mark Rose and Sandy Jerzak mentioned plans for coverage of CR topics at the A-5 meeting scheduled for November.

*Area and SEPM Reports*

(the following area reports were submitted by email to Committee Chair and compiled prior to today's meeting)

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*Soils, Mike Walker –*

With input from other CR committee members, Mike worked with the Webmaster to update and expand civil rights content of the MN-NRCS Web site.

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*Area 1, John Anderson –*

The CR activities for Area one. We (Roseau FO) viewed the Video Mendez vs. Westminster. The tape will be routed to the whole area next or used at an area meeting if one is held in the near future.

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*Area 2, Stephen Lutes –*

Area 2 has had a very active late summer and fall. Fall is 6<sup>th</sup> grade Conservation Day for several counties so far over 500 students have participated. Area 2 Civil Rights Day was completed in Alexandria. Several topics involving Civil Rights were discussed and the Mendez vs. Westminster Video was watched. The Afternoon session was on backyard and urban conservation and included food sampling of smoked turkey, sweet corn and pass around dishes brought by participants.

Several of the Area 2 employees attended Harmony Training in Granite Falls and Cultural Resources training in Deep Portage. Detroit Lakes FO is working with a new Soil Conservationist (Dustin Jasken) who is the Liaison to the White Earth Tribe. Minority program participation for CCRP and EQIP has been very strong in most of Area 2. One county has posted accomplishments with an EQIP limited resource producer.

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*Area 3, Julie Lindner -*

Aitkin County DC Steve Gorecky reported that Sweet grass plugs were planted at Sacred Burial Grounds on Big Sandy Lake. Three separate plots were planted with plugs obtained from the Plant Materials Center in Bismarck. Steve said, "I felt I didn't belong there," and that the site created a strong emotional response in him.

Cook County DC Paul Sandstrom reported that the Grand Portage Reservation Tribal Council was nominated for Farmer Magazine "Outstanding Conservationist Award" by the Cook County SWCD. Although Paul was not positive, he thought they had also been selected for the Area Award. Projects completed primarily enhanced, restored or created fish & wildlife habitat.

Pine County is in the process of building a new building projected to be completed by December 1, 2004. The new building's plans have been reviewed and designed to insure that it conforms to Accessibility Standards.

As reported briefly at the third quarter meeting, an area wide review was completed in July of 2004 for Area 3. Eighty-four commendable items were reported; with a lower number of recommended and agreed-to items listed the final pages of the review. Overall the review was seen as a positive experience for the employees of Area 3.

Isanti County DC and Acting DC in Mille Lacs County, Mary Monte reported that she has been involved in numerous outreach activities with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwa. Attached is her report to Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations.

#### OUTREACH REPORT FOR MILLE LACS COUNTY (Component of Area 3 Report)

I have been conducting Outreach activities (as DC and Acting DC) with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe on an on going basis since April of 2002. Within this time, I have had contact with the Band over 35 times. This contact has either been via mail, email, phone, or in person.

The following are some of the highlights of activities that I have provided Outreach:

- o Spring of 2002, three separate EQIP applications were submitted. Applications had approximately \$10,000 for sealing of abandoned wells and \$7181 for a wetland restoration and forest stand improvement. When President Bush signed the 2002 farm bill into law, these applications had to be re-submitted. At this time, the Band did not submit a new application.
- o I provided the Band with numerous NRCS wildlife posters to use as educational media.
- o I coordinated a meeting April 15, 2003 with NRCS and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. In attendance were Mille Lacs Band DNR Commissioner Curt Kalk and numerous Band employees. This meeting was to discuss conservation opportunities, updates of 2002 Farm Bill, and a round table discussion of conservation practices. Jerry Gorton (Project Leader for Mille Lacs Soil Survey) and Gregg Thompson (Landscape Rehabilitation Specialist) gave presentations. Jerry provided update on Mille Lacs County soil survey and explained some of the unique soil types of the county. Gregg gave a slide presentation of Rain Gardens.
- o Invited Commissioner Kurt Calk to EQIP LWG (Local Work Group) meeting for 2003 EQIP funding and to attend Area training. Also sent him a copy of LWG minutes.
- o Provided letter from Bureau of Indian Affairs in regards to BIA funding for environmental projects.
- o Provided information to the Band on the upcoming Soil and Water Conservation Society Conference in St. Paul, July 2004. Invited the Band to become Earth Team Volunteers for the conference.
- o Spring of 2004, I attended a 2nd Annual meeting with the Band to discuss conservation. Discussed conservation projects that the Band would like to see installed.

Follow-up visit with the Band to look at proposed projects. Band Members/employees present were: Curt Kalk (Commissioner of Natural Resources), Scott Hansen (Dept of Natural Resources/Environmental), Dean Staples (Forester), and Leonard Sam. NRCS repetitive were Gary Schmiedlin, Jim Dusek, Aaron Peter, Yamika Stokes, and I.

- o First NRCS contract signed with the Band in 2004 for an EQIP contract. Over \$8,500 of funds were approved. Practices in contract are for 30 acres of forest stand improvement and wildlife openings.

- o I am currently working with the Band on additional conservation practices that NRCS is providing technical services.

Submitted by, Mary Monte, Acting DC in Mille Lacs County

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*Area 5, Mark Rose –*

Overall it has been a fairly quiet quarter. We have been checking with field offices on their Official Bulletin Boards and accessibility to/in and around the office.

We have been assisting the Upper Sioux Agency in Granite Falls with a resource inventory of the reservation. I just completed the forest survey and will be having Ginger Kopp the State Forester, compile the field data into a report. We wrote up an EQIP plan for them and discussed other programs like; CRP and maybe CSP.

We talked to the Upper Sioux about hosting a Harmony session that we wanted to have in Area V and they agreed to host it which happened the first week of August. It was enjoyed by both the Tribe and NRCS employees.

A year ago the library in Worthington put in for a grant of 25,000 to fund a learning project for the Hispanics to afford them the opportunity educate themselves on working and leaving here. The grant funded computers and self directed computer workshops all in Spanish. I talked with the library director about how other communities could avail themselves of this grant. I will bring it to the next CR meeting.

As for personnel we had 9 Student Interns for most of the summer: Shantel Spielman, Tom Kost, Patrick Sievert, Bill Anderson, Casey Thomazin, and Alvin Howell, who are gone now. Nathan Blankers, Rich Berschied, and Sara Zwach are still working with us.

We also had Lynette Davila-Murphy a SCEP employee from Puerto Rico who was up in Big Stone County and like it very well. She stated she would like to come back to Minnesota.

We have two Soil Conservationist Trainees:

April Sullivan stationed in Swift County, Cheryl Isder stationed in Murray County. For WAE's we have Mike Timmerman, Noelle Saeger, Amy Chartie and Brend Smith.

We also have Chandi McCracken working in the Lyon FO as an Earth Team Volunteer.

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*Area 6, Dennis Reimers*

Activities:

I sent a quiz on Hispanic Heritage Women's History to DC's, Area office personnel, and RC&D offices.

I assisted a few DC's with Handicap Accessibility report.

On November 17<sup>th</sup>, area employees will be touring Treaty Center in St. Peter as part of cultural resources event.

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*Area 7, Mark Kulig*

Amy Dessner, Area Civil Rights Committee Member, wrote an article and distributed area wide in September celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month.

Raelene Marquez, SCT at Wabasha wrote an article on MS and distributed area wide in October relative to National Disability Awareness.

At the Area 7 all employee meeting on October 20<sup>th</sup>, each office brought a different ethnic food to share for lunch in order to celebrate cultural awareness. In addition, Jeff Vert from the SE MN Center for Independent Living spoke on Disability Awareness.

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*Disability Emphasis Program Manager, Mike Stuefen*

I attended the APIO conference in July. I was there for the whole week and went to all of the training sessions which I found to be quite good. It was an excellent conference. Good Job Pooh!!!!

I received the official Building and Site Accessibility Survey information and other related packets from Cliff Denshire in September and made copies to distribute to the appropriate people.

I have also sent out some emails that have to do with disability issues.

I spent the month of September up in Cloquet helping Martin Rosek at the Center of Excellence which has taken up most of my time.

I am currently waiting for a reply from Cliff Denshire on whether there is any leeway to the accessibility survey spec's or do we have to follow them to the letter. I will pass his answer on when I receive a response.



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*FWPM, Sandy Jerzak*

July 18-23 – Attended the National FWP/FEW conference in Nashville, TN.

July 27 – Attended the APIO conference and CR committee meeting

SEPM meeting on August 12<sup>th</sup> – Amy, Ann and I discussed incorporating SEPM business plan under the CR business plan and recruitment.

Obtained a listing of materials for the Official Bulletin Board covering CR and Personnel/Building regulations.

Developed MN bulletin on Women Equality Day – August 26<sup>th</sup>

Sept 1 – we had two women from the League of Women Voters come and discuss their roles in educating women to vote at the SO conference room.

Finalize business plan and budget for FY 2004.

FY2005 FWP committee members

Area 1 – Cari Rebischke replaces Karen Mueller

Area 2 – Stanley Musielewicz replaces Steve Cole

Area 3 – Mary Monte

Area 4 – Melanie Dickman

Area 5 – Jim Ridler

Area 6 – Kamara Holmes replaces Brenda Tonn

Area 7 – Susan Glende

SO – Leah Moore

FWPM – Sandy Jerzak – Area Office moved to a new location in Marshall. Our address is now

800 East Main Street, Suite 400, Marshall, MN 56258.

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*NRCS Tribal College Liaison, David Wise*

- The NRCS Center of Excellence located on the FDLTCC campus continues to operate as a unique partnership facility that provides excellent employment opportunities for students and serves as a valuable outreach tool to the community. I worked with the director of the center to recruit qualified students from area high schools for summer employment at the center. I also guided the director to refine the day-to-day functions of the center to ensure that the facility continues to operate in a professional and efficient manner. We are exploring the opportunity to regionalize our Center of Excellence and tie it closely to our progressing Sustainable Development Program. The center would help address

regional and Tribal land planning and management concerns and use GIS to develop models and store data for use in long-term strategic sustainable development planning. The center could help to develop a model for sustainability, combining traditional culture with the latest technology to focus on our natural resources: forest stewardship, value added environmental products from local communities (non-timber forest products, timber products, agriculture, horticulture), water quality, air quality, soil conservation, interaction of plant and animal species with ever-changing global environments, and American Indian laws and policies on sovereignty and the right to environmental justice (the right to clean air, water, and resources). The FDLTCC president and I met with the local director of RD to discuss and explore funding sources for the project. The RD director provided information on funding programs that the project may qualify for and indicated that the project has real potential for funding. FDLTCC has acquired over \$100,000 for the project and will actively pursue grants and funding opportunities. The FDLTCC plans to address the FAC about the project.

- To help celebrate their 10-year landmark as a 1994 Land Grant institution, the FDLTCC has offered to host the next FAC meeting on campus. The meeting would provide the opportunity to get together to build upon the successes of our partnerships, help develop the Land Grant process at Tribal Colleges, and discuss issues relevant to Indian Country. The meeting would also provide the forum to discuss special topics of interest to the college's Land Grant Department.
- I am a member of the FDLTCC work group that is designing a Sustainable Development degree program at the FDLTCC. The college will seek legislative initiative for a baccalaureate degree program and then approval from the MnSCU for the program. The proposed four-year Sustainable Development degree program merges small business/entrepreneurship, environmental science, clean energy, and policy, planning, and law in American Indian communities. American Indian standards are emphasized throughout the program, focusing on traditional native views of the environment and how the people interacted in a sustainable way with the natural world. The DVD showcasing the degree program has been completed and is slated for viewing by the state legislature early next year. The work group plans to present the DVD as well as the Sustainable Development Degree plan to the Fond du Lac (FDL) Reservation Business Committee in the near future to inform them about the plan and ask for their comments and suggestions.
- The Fond du Lac Gitiigaan Gardening Program enjoyed great success again this year. Sponsored by the FDL Reservation and administered through the FDLTCC, this unique program brings together members of the community to learn and share with knowledgeable presenters about gardening and healthy living through traditional and contemporary knowledge and demonstrations. At the annual Gathering of the Planning Circles held at the Black Bear Casino, I presented to the group about the Ojibwe people and our close connection to the natural world, focusing on edible and medicinal plants and their importance to our culture. The

event brought together group participants and supporters to commemorate another successful year and celebrate the benefits of gardening and healthy, traditional living.

- I attended the annual NRCS American Indian Alaskan Native Employees Association (AIANEA) Conference, held in July, 2004 and hosted by the Oneida Indian Nation at the Turning Stone Casino, in Verona, New York. Attended by USDA agency representatives, Tribal community elders and members, Reservation managers, and representatives of various other interest groups, the conference was a tremendous success. The gathering provided a forum for celebrating the government to government relationship and discussing methods for effective USDA program delivery to Tribes. The conference involved special training for American Indian SEPM's, including their roles and responsibilities in program delivery and strategies for dealing with accessibility issues. Cultural resources were also an important focus of the conference, particularly regarding Tribal sacred sites and conservation of cultural resources on private lands. I helped to arrange for two representatives from the Fond du Lac Reservation, a well-respected elder and a successful American Indian producer, to attend the event.
- The annual Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) Conference was hosted by the Minnesota Chapter in St. Paul, Minnesota. The conference brought together officials from many levels of government, researchers, education professionals, and a broad range of representatives from numerous interest groups to discuss current issues in natural resource management and planning. I arranged for the Fond du Lac Veterans Drum Group and the Vermillion Singers to perform at the Opening Ceremonies. The drum group represented the Tribal Nations and honored the international audience with ancient songs. The conference was attended by a record number of participants and provided an arena for collaboration and learning for the professionals working to conserve our natural resources locally and internationally.
- I attended the Sixth Annual Asian Pacific Islander Organization Conference held July, 2004 in Bloomington, Minnesota. Representatives from a broad cross-section of interest groups gathered to share and celebrate their resources, knowledge, and diversity. The conference focused on the important role that Asian/Pacific Islanders play in managing our resources and how they can more effectively step into leadership positions. In conjunction with the conference, the quarterly Minnesota Civil Rights Committee meeting was held. Members from the USDA National Office of Civil Rights attended the meeting. Along with various area and national issues, an important focus of the meeting involved minority scholarship opportunities. We also discussed accessibility issues of NRCS offices. It was decided that two other committee representatives and myself would arrange the order of test kits that will help to analyze whether or not NRCS offices comply with accessibility standards.

- Our planning committee arranged the Harmony Training Session which was graciously hosted by the Upper Sioux Community in August of 2004. The session was a tremendous success. The Upper Sioux provided their guidance and support with the planning, development, and completion of the training session. This unique harmony training was interwoven with cultural activities such as traditional dance, beadwork, and native language. The session culminated with the Dakota Wacipi, an annual celebration of traditional arts, crafts, dance, and food.
- I attended the FAC meeting that was held in conjunction with Farm Fest. The leadership of Minnesota USDA interacted with the public to address their concerns and give overviews on USDA programs. The officials fielded questions from the audience in an open forum.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Wisdom Steps Health Fair was held on the Fond du Lac Reservation. Sponsored by the Reservation, the fair welcomed elders from the community to come and share a day of discussion and activities that centered around healthy living. I presented on native foods and the importance of a healthy diet to the wellness and sustainability of our people.
- I communicate with the national Tribal Relations Coordinator. We discuss Land Grant activities as well as issues/barriers to program delivery in Ojibwe Country.
- I provided information to the FDLTCC president who is a member of the AIHEC Scholarship Committee on the NRCS Tribal Scholars Program. The president will relate the information at the next meeting.
- I informed the Upper Sioux Community that the PMC is available to help them with propagating culturally significant plants, bioengineering, and any other native plants needs. They have expressed a real interest, and when they have officially informed me of their specific interests, I will relay their requests to the PMC.
- I have been working with the director of the PMC in Bismarck, North Dakota to explore the prospect of developing a culturally significant plant evaluation site at FDLTCC. Since the PMC's are not located within this ecosystem, it is difficult to meet the plant materials needs of Tribal communities of this area. Fond du Lac is well known as a central location by many of the Tribes of the Upper Midwest. Therefore, FDLTCC would be an ideal location for a native plant evaluation site. Formal project/agreement status was approved, and we are currently working on developing an agreement for the project.
- The NRCS state cultural resource specialist from Minnesota and I plan to meet with Grand Portage, Bois Forte, and Fond du Lac Reservations to pursue Memorandums of Understanding that will help preserve and protect cultural resources on Tribal lands and the 1854 Ceded Territory ancestral lands.

- I assist RC&D representatives with outreach efforts to the area Reservations. I coordinate meetings with Reservation representatives and help out with projects as needed.
- I continue to advise FDLTCC administration, faculty, and staff on USDA programs and grant opportunities. I often meet with the FDLTCC president to discuss Land Grant activities. He remains committed in his dedication to the college's partnership with the USDA and in his interest in continuing our successful working relationship. .
- I maintain an open line of communication with the NRCS liaison at White Earth Tribal College. I assist and advise him with any questions/concerns that he may have.

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A discussion of miscellaneous issues, mostly related to training, followed the area reports. The issues were:

- New employees need training in the hiring process, performance appraisal system, and promotion system. This topic will be discussed further at a future committee meeting.
- Web based pornography in the workplace needs to be addressed, as well as computer security. A bulletin will be coming out on this.
- Mr. Hunt is offering committee members the experience of serving as subject matter experts to assist with candidate evaluation during the hiring process. This is an important component of the 45-day hiring process. Interested committee members are encouraged to contact Charles Montgomery and Mary Lou Werner.
- Be ready to help applicants become aware of what is needed to effectively write responses to KSAs
- Mr. Hunt requests our help in identifying promising individuals for upward mobility (e.g., a soil technician making the transition to soil conservationist). Members of the committee should be aware of educational requirements.
- Our agency is under a mandate to report progress in hiring of persons with disabilities.
- Accordingly, there is a need to identify people with disabilities. We will be working with HR in getting a bulletin out on updating the data for MN NRCS.
- Mr. Hunt requests that SEPMs check his schedule before setting the date for a program. He wants the opportunity to attend all programs.

### **Recommendations to Management**

#### *CR Recommendations for Management*

The committee is asked to bring forward any issues and concerns with regard to civil rights.

### **Next Meeting & Adjourn**

The committee agreed to meet by teleconference prior to the next regular meeting date. The expected date for this teleconference is November 2.

*Proposed Date for Next Quarterly Meeting:*

February 16th, 2005

Location and time to be determined

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm.

(Updated information on the next meeting:

The 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter committee meeting will be Wednesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, at the USDA Service Center, Room 127, in Waite Park.)